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Security Council

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Monday, 22 October 2007, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Du Xiacong
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	France	Mr. Bockel
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Soler Torrijos
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Fourteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2007/593)

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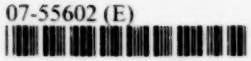

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Fourteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2007/593)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Burkina Faso in which he requests that his delegation be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Facilitator of the Ouagadougou Agreement to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Djibrill Y. Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire in which he requests that he be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Abou Moussa, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2007/593, which contains the fourteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Abou Moussa, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Moussa: The fourteenth progress report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/593), which is before Council members, provides an update on major developments in Côte d'Ivoire since the last report, of 14 May 2007, including the status of implementation of key steps of the peace process. In anticipation of the review by the Security Council of the mandate and troop level of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the current consultations provided for in Security Council resolution 1765 (2007), the report notes that none of the benchmarks set to consider an adjustment of the mandate and troop level of UNOCI has been totally met, namely the dismantling and disarmament of the militias, the disarmament of combatants and the redeployment of State administration throughout the country.

As the Secretary-General's report speaks for itself, my presentation will focus solely on the most recent developments since its publication and on the underlying risks and challenges. I will also dwell on the emerging prospects for accelerating the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement.

The continued commitment of the Ivorian leaders to take ownership of the peace process has yielded some progress in performing the key tasks provided for in the Ouagadougou political Agreement. In assuming their primary responsibility for restoring lasting peace and stability to Côte d'Ivoire, the Ivorians have also sought to develop a common understanding of the challenges facing the process and to define consensual ways of addressing them with the continued support of the Facilitator.

With regard to military and security-related matters, the gradual dismantling of the zone of confidence has reached an advance stage with the deployment of mixed brigades by the integrated command centre (ICC), the deactivation of the remaining UNOCI checkpoints and the subsequent establishment of the 17 observation posts. As a result, the UNOCI force is in the process of redeploying its troops so as to best assist the Ivorian Government in implementing the military and security aspects of the Ouagadougou political Agreement. The overall security situation remains generally stable, although fragile, owing to the improving political climate.

On the political front, the mobile court operation was relaunched on 25 September as called for by the second meeting of the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee held in Ouagadougou on 4 September. As an important prelude to the identification process, this operation was also in line with the Facilitator's pressing call on the Ivorian leaders to move from symbolic gestures to taking concrete steps towards performing the key tasks provided for in the Ouagadougou political Agreement. Of the 25 mobile court teams planned for the first phase of the operation, 20 have been deployed and are operational. As at 18 October, nearly 3,400 applications for duplicates of birth certificates have been received, of which 3,044 have been granted.

The turnout at the mobile court hearings, which had initially been very low, is now improving gradually owing to the enhanced sensitization campaign.

As to the restoration of State authority throughout the country, the Government and the Forces nouvelles authorities have been addressing the lingering security, logistical and financial constraints. That has allowed for the redeployment of 22 préfets, 27 secretaries-general and 107 sous-préfets as of 18 October.

Meanwhile, in keeping with its new mandate under Security Council resolution 1765 (2007), UNOCI continues to support the Ivorian Government in implementing the key aspects of the Ouagadougou political Agreement. In addition to providing logistical, technical and security support, the mission is finalizing the establishment of a certification cell within the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Practical modalities for the certification of the electoral process will be defined in the near future, in consultation with the Facilitator.

(*spoke in French*)

Despite the Government's tireless efforts to implement the Ouagadougou Agreement, the peace process continues to face a number of serious challenges. Restructuring the Ivorian armed forces remains a crucial task, aimed at consolidating and strengthening the reunification of the country. To that end, the Facilitator has conducted in-depth consultations with the chiefs of staff of the Ivorian armed forces and of the Forces nouvelles, as well as with the commanders of the Forces nouvelles zone and the commanders of the impartial forces. The Facilitator intends to submit, in the near future, concrete proposals to President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro related to the issue of ranks and quotas for Forces nouvelles elements that will be part of the unified army. We hope that that will facilitate the launching of the process of dismantling the militias and disarming the combatants. Indeed, the ceremonies held to symbolize the disarmament and dismantlement of armed militias, at Guiglo on 19 May, and to symbolize the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, at Bouaké on 30 July, have not been followed up by the formal launching of those processes.

As the Secretary-General noted in his report, donors have proved generous in their support for the Ouagadougou Agreement. That support could facilitate efforts to accelerate the completion of essential tasks such as DDR, the pre-identification and identification process, preparation for the elections and post-conflict recovery programmes. However, in order to encourage donors to maintain their support for the implementation process, it is essential that the Ivorian parties send strong and unequivocal messages regarding their resolve to meet the deadlines that they set for accomplishing the essential tasks set out in the Ouagadougou Agreement.

(*spoke in English*)

The very positive partnership between the United Nations and the Facilitator, and the recent appointment in Abidjan of the Facilitator's Special Representative, constitute encouraging prospects for accelerating the process of implementing the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement. Regular consultations between the UNOCI leadership and the Facilitator serve the purpose of identifying emerging risks and challenges and of exploring practical ways to address them in a proactive

fashion. Through his active engagement with the Ivorian leaders, the Special Representative of the Facilitator has been encouraging them to comply with their obligations under the Peace Agreement. In keeping with paragraph 10 of Security Council resolution 1765 (2007), and as requested by the Facilitator in a recent letter to the Secretary-General, UNOCI has been providing security support to the Special Representative of the Facilitator so as to facilitate his movements and activities.

Similarly, efforts are under way to develop synergy between the Facilitator's arbitration and UNOCI's validation and certification functions. The idea is to define criteria for ensuring the effective performance of those functions. It is hoped that the third meeting of the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee will provide a useful opportunity to define a clear-cut timetable for performing the remaining key tasks.

In conclusion, the Ivorian leaders' continued commitment to take the lead in restoring peace to their country is a key factor for effective implementation of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement. However, if the peace process is to become irreversible, special attention should be paid to addressing the outstanding political and military issues that are linked closely to the performance of other key aspects of the Agreement. It is also essential to develop pragmatic arrangements between the national stakeholders and their international partners in the context of a new partnership for peace.

I wish to recall that, as pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, the overall peace process and the improved security situation will remain fragile and vulnerable to reversals unless they are underpinned by concrete progress, especially in the performance of the crucial tasks provided for in the Ouagadougou political Agreement.

The President: I thank Mr. Moussa for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Djibrill Y. Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, who will speak on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso and Facilitator of the Ouagadougou Agreement.

Mr. Bassolé (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): At a time when the Security Council is preparing to consider the situation in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, it is a distinct honour for me to take the floor before the Council on behalf of President Blaise Compaoré, Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Facilitator of the direct inter-Ivorian dialogue, to inform members of his assessment of the progress made in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. It remains understood that that facilitation is being carried out under the sponsorship of the African Union.

I should like to take this opportunity to express once again to the Security Council the Facilitator's deep gratitude and great satisfaction with regard to the trust that has been placed in him through the endorsement of the Ouagadougou political Agreement, signed under his auspices on 4 March 2007 by President Laurent Gbagbo and Mr. Guillaume Soro. I also wish to express to the Council and to the entire United Nations system the Facilitator's sincere thanks for the multifaceted support provided to him as he has carried out his sensitive mission of following up on the Ouagadougou political Agreement. Here, I must pay a well-deserved tribute to the international community as a whole, particularly the forces of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the French troops of Operation Licorne and all donors involved in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Ouagadougou political Agreement has led to a fundamental change in the political situation in Côte d'Ivoire. In addition to a general calming of the political and social environment, it has made it possible to reunify the country by removing the zone of confidence and redeploying the administration throughout the national territory. Now, military and political tensions have given way to a genuine dialogue, which is gradually taking root among the various Ivorian political forces and opening the way for national reconciliation.

With regard to the programmes aimed at the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatant forces and the disarmament and dismantlement of armed militias, provided for in section III of the Ouagadougou political Agreement, it must be recognized that they have not yet been satisfactorily carried out. Nevertheless, we can welcome the fact that the conditions for that achievement are gradually being put in place. Thus, the establishment on 16 March 2007 of the integrated command centre, which is responsible for

implementing the military aspects of the Agreement, is a precondition for the execution of those programmes. Likewise, the ceremony held in Guiglo on 19 May 2007 to symbolize the destruction of weapons surrendered by armed militias and the flame-of-peace ceremony held on 30 July in Bouaké, by virtue of their symbolic nature, have resulted in an easing of political and military tensions, which has also promoted the launching of those programmes.

At present, the former combatant forces are no longer using their weapons in the political debate. People and goods are circulating freely throughout the national territory. The Facilitator is working to establish the modalities for military integration — quotas and ranks — and to ensure the beginning of the civic service in the near future.

The implementation of the major operations provided for under the Ouagadougou political Agreement, such as identification and the electoral process, have been delayed with regard to the initial timeline set out in the 4 March Agreement. However, we must point out that this delay is no way a reflection of bad will from the parties or Ivorian political actors in the implementation of the Agreement.

This general delay can essentially be explained by the complexity of the different operations, the lack of necessary financial resources for their implementation and administrative and technical difficulties inherent in the post-conflict situation of Côte d'Ivoire. The security problems, illustrated specifically by the 29 June attack against Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, are also obstacles to the implementation of the Ouagadougou political Agreement according to the initial timeline. The Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee and UNOCI are working on removing the obstacles that mark the process of emerging from the crisis.

The Facilitator welcomes the fact that the peace process that started on 4 March 2007 has been warmly embraced on a national level, including by political actors and civil society, the media and the population itself, as can be seen in the many cultural events and different initiatives around the return to peace.

The peace flame ceremony organized in Bouaké on 30 July has, beyond its symbolism, significantly contributed to an easing of national political tensions and the strengthening of national cohesion. Similarly, the official launching last 25 September of the mobile court hearings, preceded by a redeployment of the magistrates, préfets and sous-préfets in the north of the country, as well as their continuation to date without any obstacles show that we have crossed into a decisive phase in the process of emerging from crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

The holding on 4 September 2007 of the second meeting of the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee, with the participation of all members of the consultative organ, the establishment of which was supported by resolution 1765 (2007), has given an additional push to the process of implementing the Ouagadougou political Agreement. The same applies to the effective presence of the Special Representative of the Facilitator in Côte d'Ivoire since 10 September 2007.

The activities of the Special Representative of the Facilitator, which deserve to be supported and encouraged, given the scope of the task, will soon be strengthened by the dispatch of a team of experts in different fields that will help him in his daily facilitation, conciliation and mediation tasks. Thus, he will be able to better help the parties to overcome the obstacles and bottlenecks in implementing the Ouagadougou political Agreement and help in finding solutions to the various difficulties that might arise in that process.

The Facilitator's work covers the entire scope of the task that remains to be completed to achieve peace in Côte d'Ivoire. He is aware of the multiple difficulties that beset the different operations provided for by the Ouagadougou Agreement. However, the Facilitator continues to have faith in the Ivorian parties and their ability to overcome their differences to consolidate peace and national reconciliation.

Côte d'Ivoire still needs, I am convinced, the support of the international community and especially of the Security Council to complete the peace process. That is why the Facilitator believes that the United Nations should continue to play an important role in Côte d'Ivoire's process of emerging from conflict, specifically through the certification functions of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and reassuring activities of the impartial forces of UNOCI and Licorne.

In this regard, the Facilitator welcomes the appointment of a new Special Representative of the

Secretary-General, Mr. Choi Young-jin. I am sure that this appointment will contribute in giving a new dynamic to the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. I would like to express my congratulations to Mr. Choi and my wishes for every success in this new mission. I also assure him that the Facilitator is available to work with him.

The signatories of the Ouagadougou political Agreement have agreed to establish an institutional framework to implement the Agreement, in order to organize presidential elections that will be open, free and transparent, according to the agreed timeline covering the period from March to December 2008. The Facilitator requests that the Security Council accompany commitments undertaken by President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, so that they can create the conditions for a democratic, fair and peaceful election. The Facilitator also wishes that during the first semester of 2008 the operations linked to identification and voter registration processes can be completed according to a new timeline that will take into account the technical and organizational needs.

Aware of the relatively fragile character of what has been gained by the implementation of the Ouagadougou political Agreement and the difficulties of all types that intervene in the peace process, the Facilitator will push Ivorian actors and their technical and financial partners to carry out essential operations to guarantee credible elections, in particular, the identification of populations, the establishment of a reliable electoral list, disarmament, and security for the electoral process.

The certification function that from now on will be carried out through all stages of the electoral process by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as the arbitration function that the Facilitator will undertake with his support, will reinforce confidence and support of Ivorians, upon whom the building of peace and national reconciliation depends.

In view of the efforts already undertaken on the ground and the sustained will of Ivorian political actors, the Security Council should examine with special attention any requests from the Ivorian parties with respect to peacebuilding and national reconciliation.

In spite of the slowness in the implementation of the Ouagadougou political Agreement, and in spite of the difficulties that have come up here and there in the process of emerging from the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, hope for true, lasting peace in this country is within reach. Ivorian political actors will absolutely have to fully live up to their respective responsibilities in carrying out the peace process. It is also necessary for the international community to support the Ivorian efforts to find a permanent way out of the crisis.

I can assure the Council that the Facilitator will spare no effort in continuing to accompany Ivorians toward peace. He counts on the decisive support of the United Nations and in particular that of the Security Council.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make comments or ask questions in response to the briefings that we have just heard.

On behalf of the Council, I wish to extend a warm welcome to the Secretary of State for Cooperation and Francophony of France, Mr. Jean-Marie Bockel.

Mr. Bockel (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank all those who have made statements. In particular, I would like to welcome the presence of the Minister of Burkina Faso, Mr. Bassolé, and tell him that I listened carefully to his very illuminating presentation of the peace process.

I will also take advantage of this opportunity to congratulate Burkina Faso on its election to the Security Council for the 2008-2009 period. I have no doubt that Burkina Faso will fully play its role there in the continuing peace efforts that it has conducted in recent years in its subregion.

In this respect, I wish to pay tribute to President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, who fosters on a daily basis the sensitive dialogue between the Ivorian parties. It is very important that a senior representative of his country has come today to present its vision to the Security Council and, through the Council, to the entire international community. This debate is an opportunity to show once again our full support for the Facilitator and the Ouagadougou process. The Security Council has endorsed the political agreement concluded among the Ivorians and has referred to it on

a constant basis. But we need to forcefully reiterate this support; this agreement is a real chance for Côte d'Ivoire to emerge from the crisis. There is quite simply no alternative to it today.

The process formalized between 4 and 6 March 2007 by the signing of the Ouagadougou political Agreement and the supplementary agreement have led to initial progress, the most visible of which, after the deployment of the 6 mixed units of the two parties defence and security forces, is probably the dismantling of the zone of confidence, which the Minister has mentioned, and its replacement by a series of United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) observation posts. Also, significant symbolic gestures have been made by the Ivorian parties to mark the launch of the mobile courts, the start of disarming militias, the restoration of State authority throughout the country and the establishment of an integrated command centre so that the formerly competing security forces can be better coordinated.

But this progress is not enough. As Minister Bassolé indicated frankly a moment ago, and as the Secretary-General notes in his latest report, which Mr. Abou Moussa just presented to us very clearly, the parties have fallen seriously behind in the implementation of the Agreement. This is worrying. Admittedly, no date is set in stone, but there has to be a clear and irreversible prospect of open, free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections, in accordance with international standards. This objective presupposes that the Ivorian parties abide by their commitments and establish a new timetable that will lead Côte d'Ivoire towards an emergence from the crisis.

In the face of a long and complex crisis, we need, as the Secretary-General has noted: to resolve the thorny question of ranks, which is paralysing any real integration of the defence forces; to ensure an effective disarmament of militias, which is a prerequisite for their dismantling; to combat arms proliferation, without which there is no security; and, at the same time, to ensure greater respect for the rule of law.

In the very short term, however, as the Minister has observed, priority must be given to the process of population identification. I stress this point because of the specific role of the United Nations in this regard. Indeed, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General must certify all stages of the electoral process, on which the return to civilian peace is based. In this respect, I should like to welcome the appointment of Mr. Choi as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and I pay tribute to Mr. Abou Moussa for his interim work, which he has discharged with competence and determination.

I stress the crucial nature of the task of certification which the Council has entrusted to the Special Representative in resolution 1765 (2007). Each of the stages in the electoral process is important. Without proper identification, how can we ensure inclusion of all the citizens who wish to appear on the electoral rolls, and thus how can we ensure the credibility of the subsequent stages in the electoral process? I do not underestimate the real difficulties of this process, which is extremely sensitive, but which is the way to resolve this crisis. Côte d'Ivoire does, however, have in the Ouagadougou Agreement an effective tool: the mobile court hearings. It is urgent that the parties, as the Facilitator has stated, make rapid progress in the large-scale deployment of these mobile court hearings, which must have the personnel agreed on and receive the necessary protection.

What can the Security Council do, and, more generally speaking, what can the United Nations do? It is not the Council's role to state, here in New York, how the many questions that the Facilitator is trying to untangle can be resolved in all their details; the road map was set out by the Ivorians themselves in Ouagadougou. But it is certainly the responsibility of the Security Council, through its support for the Facilitator's efforts, to ensure that both parties fulfil their commitments and see that the process is successfully completed.

It is essential that the Security Council maintains its support for Côte d'Ivoire in this transition period. France, for its part, will continue to act to this end, as it has done all along. Like the Secretary-General, France considers it necessary to preserve the mandate of the impartial forces and the level of UNOCI troops, as defined in July. This mandate, while adapting their role, makes it possible for them to maintain their capacity to react promptly in case of an attack on the peace process.

My delegation has presented a draft press statement along these lines, and we hope that the Council will be able to adopt it today.

The Ivorian peace process has a chance of succeeding. We must seize this opportunity fully by supporting the Facilitator's actions and by showing ourselves to be vigilant in terms of the commitments that the Ivorian parties assumed in his presence. A fresh impetus, as called for by the Secretary-General, is essential today. It is not out of reach. The Ivorians can count on the Security Council and, allow me to say so here, on France to support their efforts to this end.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): South Africa wishes to welcome His Excellency Mr. Djibrill Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, in his capacity as representative of the Facilitator of the Ivorian peace process, President Blaise Compaoré, and thank him for his briefing here today. May I also use this opportunity to express my delegation's sincere appreciation for the continuing and active facilitation role of President Compaoré. I would be remiss if I did not also congratulate Burkina Faso on its election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the period 2008-2009. We look forward to working together with Burkina Faso on this Council.

My delegation also wishes to thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Côte d'Ivoire for his continued dedication, and the work of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), under his leadership, as well as for the briefing to this Council.

The signing of the Ouagadougou political Agreement on 4 March 2007 was historic. It led the Ivorian parties, with the assistance of their neighbours, particularly President Compaoré of Burkina Faso, to reach an agreement and create ownership for resolving an issue that had baffled the international community for many years. The Secretary-General has described the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement as a "unique turning point" in the Ivorian peace process. "Ownership of the peace process", the Secretary-General has stated, "imposes a unique responsibility on the Ivorian parties to implement the Ouagadougou Agreement in full and in good faith". Since the signing of the Agreement, it has often been pointed out that some of the processes and obligations that the Parties had to carry out in terms of the Ouagadougou Agreement have not yet materialized. South Africa, however, remains optimistic that all the parties in Côte d'Ivoire have demonstrated the political will to move the process forward and to adhere to the agreed-upon time frames. We agree with Prime Minister Soro, who has reassured everyone that his commitment to preserving the credibility of the electoral process is more important than adhering to strict deadlines.

South Africa welcomes the setting up of the Integrated Command Centre, the establishment of the six mixed brigade units and the launch of the mobile courts, as well as the initial work done with regard to the identification and registration of voters, the disarmament and dismantling of militias, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and the restoration of State authority throughout the country. My delegation is particularly mindful of the technical, logistical and capacity challenges that hamper the efforts of the parties to fully adhere to the timetable for the implementation of such difficult technical processes as the dismantling of militias, the cantonment of former fighting forces, the redeployment of State authority and the deployment of the mobile courts. Nevertheless, we are confident that, with the assistance of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, the support of the international community and the political commitment of the parties, those challenges are not insurmountable.

The recently held donors' round table is demonstrative of the goodwill, commitment and desire of the international community to see peace, prosperity and development return to Côte d'Ivoire. We welcome the pledge of $388 million in support of the peace process made by the international community. What is now required is for those pledges to be honoured. South Africa calls on the international and donor communities to continue their material and technical support for the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and for the full implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement.

In conclusion, my delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General expressed in his most recent report, in which he states that

> "The positive political atmosphere that has prevailed in Côte d'Ivoire since the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement gives the Ivorian parties the opportunity to make concrete progress towards its implementation." (*S/2007/593, para. 59*)

We also agree with the Secretary-General that the momentum generated by the signing of the Agreement should not be lost and that

> "The overall peace process and the improved security situation will remain fragile and vulnerable to reversals unless it is underpinned by concrete progress". (*ibid*)

South Africa therefore commits itself to working with the leaders of Côte d'Ivoire and the international community in ensuring that the promises of the Ouagadougou Agreement come to fruition and that peace, stability and prosperity once again return to the people of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to welcome the presence among us of Mr. Djibrill Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, in his capacity as representative of the Facilitator of the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. Through him, I would also like to congratulate President Blaise Compaoré for his important contribution to peacebuilding in Côte d'Ivoire. I would also like to welcome the presence among us of Jean-Marie Bockel, Secretary of State for Cooperation and la Francophony of France, as well as to thank Mr. Abou Moussa for his introduction of the report (S/2007/593) of the Secretary-General.

The signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement was a milestone in the process of peaceably transforming Ivorian society. Nevertheless, seven months after that event, we are concerned to note the significant slackening in the initial momentum to implement the Agreement — given that timelines have been extended considerably and we do not yet know when the process will be completed. We are aware of the overall problem of the capacity of national institutions to manage the process and of their need for international support in the areas of logistics and capacity building. In that regard, we would like the underscore the need for support for the Integrated Command Centre and the mixed units. However, we believe that those difficulties should not be an insurmountable obstacle to continuing the peace process.

We are pleased that, despite delays in implementation, the parties in Côte d'Ivoire still have the political will to continue to make progress, as attested to once again following the reprehensible attack against Prime Minister Guillaume Soro. The signals sent out in that connection to Ivorian society point to unwavering commitment to peace and to unity and resolve in the face of violence.

We would like to underscore the valuable support of the financing provided by the international community in the implementation of the Agreement and post-conflict recovery. That positive element provides additional momentum and serves to underscore the responsibility of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to respond to national and international expectations vis-à-vis the meeting of timelines.

Some of the specific tasks to be accomplished urgently include the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, the dismantling of militias, the merging and restructuring of defence and security forces, the re-establishment of State administration throughout the country, the identification of the population and voter registration. The process as a whole should be geared towards the holding of elections as the final component of peacebuilding. In that regard, it is necessary both to establish an exact timeframe for the holding of elections and to emphasize the importance of certifying each stage to ensuring absolute credibility of the process.

My delegation therefore calls on the Facilitator to continue his efforts to speed up the peace process. We also call on regional organizations in Africa, and especially on the Economic Community of West African States, to continue their close cooperation with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in implementing the Ouagadougou Agreement. Furthermore, we call on the international community as a whole to provide support in the areas of logistical support and capacity building, especially for the Integrated Command Centre and the mixed units.

Special attention should also be paid to the issue of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, where there are still violations by elements of the Forces nouvelles, who have been intimidating civilians and subjecting them to arbitrary detention and arrest. We are also concerned about reports of trafficking in human beings, especially children, for prostitution and forced labour.

Given the current situation, my delegation believes that it is important to maintain the present troop levels in UNOCI. We look forward to a new report from the Secretary-General on the basis of which we can consider the steps to be taken in the future.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I too would like to add my delegation's voice in welcoming Mr. Bassolé and Mr. Abou Moussa, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General. It is very good to be able to hear from them at first hand in the Security Council.

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I would also like to extend our warmest congratulations to Minister Bassolé on Burkina Faso's election to the Security Council for the period 2008-2009. As the impressive work done by President Compaore and Special Representative Badini has shown, securing peace in Côte d'Ivoire has been a very important venture. We believe that the Council will benefit enormously from Burkina Faso's experience and wisdom as we work to ensure peace and security, not only in West Africa but across the continent and more widely. Allow me to say that the United Kingdom very much looks forward to being able to work closely with the Mission of Burkina Faso on those shared ventures.

I would also like to join others in welcoming the appointment of Mr. Choi Young-jin as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire. He is well known to United Nations representatives in New York, and we look forward to working with him. His role will be crucial, in particular in certifying the electoral process.

I would like to reaffirm the United Kingdom's support for the Ouagadougou Agreement, which is the best chance yet to achieve sustainable peace in Côte d'Ivoire. As Minister Bockel has said, it is important that that the Council remains engaged. Like other speakers, however, we do have some concerns about the serious delays in meeting the timetable set out by the Ouagadougou Agreement. I should like to make four observations in that connection.

First, free, fair and credible elections are central to resolving the crisis. Secondly, greater momentum is needed on identifying voters through the mobile courts. Thirdly, as other speakers have mentioned, integration of the Forces nouvelles into the army and the disarmament and demobilization of militia will also be critical to success. Fourthly, we are concerned by reports of human rights abuses, in particular sexual violence against women and young girls, the increased trafficking of children, and forced labour. I think it is true that a culture of impunity for those responsible still persists. We would like to use this occasion to urge greater efforts to address those issues in Côte d'Ivoire, and we call on the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General to make that one of his priorities.

Lastly, I should like to say that we support the press statement proposed by Minister Bassolé.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): We would like to thank the Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso, Mr. Bassolé, for his statement and to express our appreciation to Burkina Faso, and in particular to President Compaoré for his facilitation of the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, which has been very instrumental in bringing the peace process back on track.

We also thank acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his briefing and the Secretary-General for his fourteenth progress report on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

Thirdly, we would like to commend the Ivorian stakeholders for their efforts so far, which have registered some progress after a long period of political stalemate, accompanied by insecurity and the suffering of the Ivorian people.

We welcome the fact that the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement continues to enjoy broad support in Côte d'Ivoire, including on the part of the opposition. It is important to maintain and promote that wide support through concrete progress and tangible results in implementing the Agreement in the run-up to the elections. The credibility of the electoral process will be absolutely crucial to the success of the elections and the stability of post-electoral development in Côte d'Ivoire. Yet, that credibility can be achieved only through a truly inclusive process allowing for the equal, free and fair participation of and competition among all political forces.

Despite positive developments in Côte d'Ivoire after the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement, we are concerned that the process has begun to lose momentum. Significant delays in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement, as described in the report of the Secretary-General, are truly worrying. In that respect, we agree with the Facilitator's suggestion, also endorsed by the Secretary-General, that establishing certain realistic timelines and benchmarks for the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement could serve as a useful and needed impetus for the peace process.

We are particularly concerned about the limited progress in the unification and restructuring of the Ivorian armed forces. On numerous occasions, we have witnessed how crucial the integration and reform of security forces are to ensuring sustainable security in post-conflict environments. Côte d'Ivoire is no exception. On the contrary, the unification and restructuring of the Ivorian security sector are also important for national reconciliation, the reunification of the country, and the effective exercise of State authority throughout the country, in particular in the volatile East and West.

Last but not least, we are disappointed that the improved political climate has not been truly reflected in the everyday life of the Ivorian people, in particular in the field of human rights, which continue to be violated in the country. The security situation also continues to be extremely fragile, the attack on Prime Minister Soro's plane being the most blatant but not the only example. In addition, the continued presence of militias poses a constant and very serious threat to the prospects for peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire. We have also noted some worrying information in that regard in the recent report of the group of experts for the sanctions regime in Côte d'Ivoire. We believe that close cooperation between the Council and the Ivorian authorities in that respect will continue in that field as well and that the available measures will be fully implemented in order to promote stability in the country.

Taking into account the circumstances on the ground, we would like to express our continued support for the presence of impartial forces in Côte d'Ivoire within their current mandate and troop levels.

Côte d'Ivoire faces a unique opportunity to embark on a new era of regained stability, security and prosperity. We would therefore like to join the call of the Secretary-General, addressed to all the stakeholders of the peace process and in particular to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, not to waste this unique opportunity for the country and the Ivorian people.

Finally, we welcome the appointment of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Ambassador Choi, and wish him every success.

Last but not least, we thank the French delegation for presenting the draft press statement and we think it is a very good outcome of today's discussion.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Burkina Faso, Mr. Bassolé, and the Secretary of State for Cooperation and Francophony of France, Mr. Bockel. We note the detailed contributions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), chaired by Burkina Faso, and of France to the process of an Ivorian settlement.

We are grateful to the Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his information on the activities of United Nations operations in Côte d'Ivoire and the latest developments in that country, and for his efforts to achieve a settlement.

In our view, the Secretary-General's report contains a balanced and objective assessment of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. Given the ongoing unstable security situation, we support the Secretary-General's recommendation on the utility of maintaining the present numbers of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

We have closely followed developments in the peace process in the country. Moscow welcomed the Ouagadougou Agreement, reached at the initiative of the Ivorian parties themselves. We feel that it represents a unique opportunity to achieve a comprehensive settlement, provided that the parties implement the obligations they have assumed within the established time frame.

We strongly condemn any attempt to destabilize the peace process, such as the attempt on the life of Ivorian Prime Minister Guillaume Soro on 29 June, which is evidence of the presence of destructive forces in the country, of the vulnerability of the peace process, and of the need for the international community to lend it further support.

We note with satisfaction several positive steps recently taken towards a peaceful settlement, such as the deployment of mixed police units to maintain law and order and the establishment of UNOCI observer posts. We note with regret, however, the slowing pace of the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement. The Ivorian sides must display greater resolve in the further implementation of key tasks, including the disarmament and disbanding of former combatants, the restoration of civilian law, the reform of the security

sector, and the reassertion of State authority throughout the territory.

In the context of the importance of the forthcoming electoral process in Côte d'Ivoire, we feel that the international community must ensure that the country receives timely assistance in the preparation and conduct of open, free and fair elections in accordance with international standards.

We are sure that subsequent action by the country's leaders aimed at effective implementation of the Agreement will lead in the near future to a lasting, final internal political settlement. The United Nations has an important role to play in the efforts aimed at the achievement of that goal, and we welcome the appointment by the Secretary-General of his new Special Representative, Ambassador Choi. He can count on the full support of the Russian Federation in the discharge of his mandate.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to thank Foreign Minister Bassolé and Mr. Abou Moussa, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for their statements. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Belgium would like to reiterate its full support to the Ouagadougou political Agreement, whereby, some seven months ago, the parties to the Ivorian conflict were able to give new impetus to the stalled peace process. We should recognize the determination and the political courage of former belligerents who have been able to leave the past behind and identify the conditions for finding a way out of the crisis.

The Agreement would also not have been possible without the facilitation of Burkina Faso and the personal involvement of its President, Mr. Blaise Compaoré, and of Foreign Minister Bassolé, who is with us today. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Burkina Faso, a friendly country that we will soon be able to welcome to this table as a member of the Security Council.

Despite positive developments over the past few months, we are well aware that the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire remains fragile, and we are concerned at the considerable delays in the implementation of the Agreement. As stated the fourteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) (S/2007/593), which was presented to us this morning by the Principal Deputy Special Representative, Ivorians must take up their responsibilities and ensure a speedy and complete implementation of the key provisions of the Agreement. That refers in particular to the identification operations, which should lead to irreproachable elections; the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and the disarmament of the militias.

I would also like to state that, like other delegations, Belgium is concerned about the persistent allegations of human rights violations, especially with regard to women and children, as described in the report of the Secretary-General and in other sources. However, we do recognize that progress has been made since the Ouagadougou Agreement.

I cannot conclude my brief statement without welcoming the announcement of the appointment of Mr. Choi Young-jin as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire. He will be taking over at an opportune time, as Mr. Bassolé stated, to give a new impetus to the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Moussa for the excellent work carried out during the interim period.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): At the outset, I wish to thank Mr. Djibrill Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, who is with us today as representative of the Facilitator, President Compaore, for his statement on the development of the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. We also wish to thank the Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his briefing and to the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2007/593).

We are mindful of the positive political atmosphere that has prevailed in Côte d'Ivoire since the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement. However, we are somewhat discouraged by the possible implications of lapses in the timelines for the implementation of important tasks identified in the Agreement, as referred to by previous speakers.

We recognize the importance of the planning and financial and logistical resources necessary to ensure an accelerated and sustained implementation of the Agreement. Continued international support for capacity-building, including its timely channelling, is therefore essential. However, it is important to

underline the special responsibility of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to give added impetus to the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement.

A key to progress in the implementation of the Agreement is a secure security situation. We are encouraged to note the Secretary-General's assessment that the country has remained generally calm since the signing of the Agreement in March 2007. At the same time, we are mindful of the continued fragile nature of the security situation, as evidenced, inter alia, by the 29 June 2007 incident and the situation in the north of the country. We commend the efforts by President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro in overcoming any attempts to disrupt the peace process. Continued international support in enhancing the security conditions through the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) is critical.

My delegation is also deeply troubled by reports of trafficking of children for labour and prostitution, as part of the growing problem of human trafficking for forced prostitution and labour in the country. Support for the enhancement of national capacities to deal with those issues should be a priority.

We also deem it important that issues regarding the conduct of personnel and discipline in UNOCI, as mentioned in the report, be fully addressed.

We concur with the view of the Secretary-General that, since progress on the two key benchmarks to review the mandate and troop levels of UNOCI has not yet been achieved, we should maintain the current troop levels.

We have consistently been of the view that the United Nations must remain closely engaged with and supportive of the people and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in their difficult journey towards a peaceful and prosperous country. We are therefore extremely pleased to be informed of the appointment of Mr. Choi Young-jin as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Okio (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to first welcome His Excellency Mr. Djibrill Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso and to thank him for the information he has kindly given us here on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, current Chairman of the Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Economic Community of West African States and Facilitator of the direct inter-Ivorian dialogue. My delegation once again congratulates Burkina Faso on its election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2008-2010.

We would also like to welcome Mr. Jean-Marie Bockel, Secretary of State for Cooperation and Francophony of France. We followed with great interest the briefing by Mr. Abou Moussa, to whom we are most grateful for the quality of his work as Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and we have duly noted his presentation of the fourteenth report of the Secretary-General on Côte d'Ivoire (S/2007/593).

The report indicates that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire is improving, and we welcome that fact. The President and Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire maintain good working relations. The Ouagadougou Agreement has the overall support of the entire Ivorian political class. The security situation has remained fairly stable in Côte d'Ivoire since the signing of that Agreement. All of that is good news, and it reassures us.

However, it should be noted that the security situation in the country nonetheless remains fragile, as shown by the attempt on the life of Prime Minister Guillaume Soro in Bouaké on 29 June 2007. We consider that the Ivorian political class should endeavour to ensure that such incidents are not repeated. My delegation also notes that the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement has slowed somewhat, owing to lack of respect for timelines and to the limited capacity of Ivorian national institutions mandated to carry out essential tasks such as the dismantling of the militias, the disarmament of former combatants, redeployment of State authority throughout the country and identification of the population.

As previously noted, implementation of the Agreement has also encountered difficulties related to the financing of certain operations. In that respect, my delegation welcomes the pledges, totalling approximately $388 million, made by bilateral and multilateral partners of Côte d'Ivoire in support of the Government's post-conflict recovery programme.

The ongoing regularization of relations between the Ivorian Government and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is also an encouraging sign. Indeed, in early August the IMF

disbursed the first segment of the Fund's emergency post-conflict assistance programme, $60 million, and the World Bank has adopted a $120-million post-conflict assistance programme aimed at supporting the Government's emergency recovery programme. It is now incumbent upon the Ivorian Government to meet certain requirements, including by taking the necessary steps to set timelines and benchmarks for the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement, so that those funds can be disbursed.

The appointment of Mr. Boureima Badini as Special Representative of the Facilitator in Côte d'Ivoire and his 12 September arrival in Abidjan show the willingness and determination of the President of the Republic of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, to work tirelessly towards the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement; we encourage him in that endeavour.

My delegation unreservedly supports the request made by the Secretary-General to Member States to provide the support necessary for the Facilitator's activities — as noted earlier in the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso — and to support the Office of the Special Representative of the Facilitator in Abidjan.

My delegation reaffirms its full support for the Ouagadougou political Agreement. We encourage the coordination of the simultaneous patrols which the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) continue to carry out in the border areas in order to prevent the illegal cross-border movement of arms and combatants.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the current mandate and troop levels of UNOCI be maintained and that a review of the question be considered once we get closer to the key objectives, namely, the dismantling of the militias, the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants, the identification of the population and the restoration of State authority throughout the territory.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its gratitude to UNOCI and the French forces supporting it, to the Economic Community of West African States, to the relevant United Nations entities, and to humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations for their major contributions to the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Choi Young-jin as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and we assure him of our full cooperation in the discharge of his mission.

Finally, my delegation supports the draft statement to the press proposed by the French delegation.

Mr. Du Xiacong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the briefings by Mr. Moussa and Mr. Bassolé on the latest developments in the Ivorian situation. China has been greatly concerned about developments in that situation. We sincerely hope that peace and stability will be restored to Côte d'Ivoire and that the well-being of its people will be secured. It is heartening to note that a positive political atmosphere has been maintained in the peace process since the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement, and that concrete progress has been made. The security situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains calm and the volatile situation in the west continues to improve. China appreciates the efforts made by President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro and by all the Ivorian parties. We also appreciate the positive role played by President Compaore as Facilitator for the Ivorian issue. Granted, the Ivorian peace process will by no means be a simple matter; it requires considerable effort by all parties. China urges all Ivorian parties to continue to look at the big picture, to maintain mutual political confidence and to consult and work with one another in a cooperative spirit.

Undertaking such tasks as the disarmament of ex-combatants, the reconstruction of administrative institutions, the registration of voters and the identification of the population will create favourable conditions for the general election. The United Nations should strengthen its coordination with regional and subregional organizations including the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and should continue to provide necessary assistance to Côte d'Ivoire. China stands ready to continue to make its own contributions.

Ms. Wolcott (United States of America): I wish to thank Foreign Minister Bassolé and Mr. Moussa for their briefings. We are pleased to have Ambassador Djédjé here with us as well. The United States would also like to acknowledge the essential role played by President Compaore and his Government in brokering the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement. We look forward

to working with such proven diplomats in the Council next year.

The United States applauds the launching of the mobile courts on 25 September. However, as those courts are not operating throughout the country, we urge the Ivorian Government to expand the implementation of that process as soon as possible. Only through a complete, thorough and credible identification, and later registration, process can the ground be paved for free and fair elections in Côte d'Ivoire.

We were pleased to see the formal commencement of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts on 20 July, but we are all frustrated by the slow progress of DDR in Côte d'Ivoire since. We hope the ongoing disagreement over ranks and numbers of personnel expected to join the unified army can soon be resolved so that this important process can move forward.

The United States reiterates its condemnation of the attack on Prime Minister Soro on 29 June and the several deaths that resulted and stresses that the perpetrators of that criminal act must be brought to justice. We note the decrease in reports of human rights violations in Côte d'Ivoire since the signing of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement but are still concerned that human rights abuses against civilians continue throughout the country. We encourage all Ivorian parties to abide by international human rights standards.

The United States is encouraged by a new bill drafted in January 2007 and mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/593) that would establish anti-trafficking programmes in the Ministry of Family, Women and Social Affairs, the judicial police, the International Organization for Migration and several national and international organizations. We understand that that measure is now with the Council of Ministers, and we encourage Côte d'Ivoire to adopt the law soon.

Finally, let me also indicate United States support for the draft press statement on Côte d'Ivoire that was distributed by the French delegation.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. Allow me, through you, to thank Mr. Djibrill Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso and the Special Representative of the Facilitator of the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, President Blaise Compaoré, for his good offices and for his briefing to the Council this morning. Allow me also to thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, for his comprehensive briefing to the Council this morning.

The Agreement signed in Ouagadougou on 4 March 2007 by President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaime Soro represent a historic turning point and a major opportunity to turn a new page in the Ivorian crisis.

We have been closely watching the implementation of that Agreement in the first months following its conclusion. That period witnessed a number of positive developments, including symbolic initiatives such as the flame of peace ceremony in Bouaké, during which the process of disarming the Forces nouvelles was launched in the presence of the President, the Prime Minister and a number of African heads of State or their representatives. In addition, there were the practical steps to implement the Agreement, such as the establishment of the integrated command centre in charge of implementing the military and security aspects, the deployment of mixed contingents, the replacement of the zone of confidence with the green line, and the launching of the process of identification of the population and voter registration.

However, the failure to meet the deadlines set by the Ouagadougou Agreement for taking those steps is a cause for concern. The same goes for the obstacles facing completion of the unification of the defence and security forces, disarming and disbanding the militias, and completing the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as the difficulty of redeploying the State administration throughout the country.

The report of the Secretary-General currently before the Council (S/2007/593) identifies the obstacles in the way of full implementation of the Agreement. The Government and the other Ivorian parties must therefore act immediately to overcome those hurdles, especially through the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee and the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement, with the assistance of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the French Operation Licorne troops, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the

regional intermediaries. By so doing, they will avail themselves of the historic opportunity offered by the positive political climate currently prevailing in Côte d'Ivoire and extricate the country from its current crisis.

The embargo on arms imports and the targeted sanctions imposed by the Council should be fully adhered to. It is also necessary not to hinder the activities of UNOCI, the French troops which support it, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the Facilitator or the Group of Experts established under resolution 1643 (2005).

While the security and political situation in the country has started to improve gradually since the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement, the economic and humanitarian situation of the Ivorian people has not improved commensurately. Since we are aware of the close link between peace and security on the one hand and the stability of the socioeconomic situation on the other, we stress the importance of focusing on the economic recovery of the country and on addressing the worsening humanitarian situation, including providing assistance in the return of persons displaced by war. It goes without saying that international financial support has a critical role to play in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement and in post-conflict recovery. We therefore commend the high level of funding that has been recently provided by the other international stakeholders in response to the appeal launched by the Government.

Finally, the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire is also one of the issues that must be addressed in that country where civilians are still subject to abusive behaviour by Government defence and security forces and members of the Forces nouvelles. Furthermore, many reports note the growing problem of human trafficking for forced prostitution and forced labour, particularly the trafficking of children.

Mr. Soler Torrijos (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to join those who have already spoken in thanking the following speakers for their statements: Mr. Abou Moussa, the Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI); Mr. Djibrill Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, who spoke on behalf of President Blaise Compaoré, Facilitator of the dialogue; and Mr. Jean-Marie Bockel, Secretary of State for Cooperation and Francophony, chairman of the French delegation.

I would also like to congratulate Burkina Faso on its election to the Security Council for 2008 and 2009.

Secondly, I would like point to the positive developments that we can see in Côte d'Ivoire, where the countries members of the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Security Council are showing a great deal of coordination and cooperation in their peacemaking and conflict prevention efforts.

After almost seven years, Côte d'Ivoire has continued to deal with a political and military crisis whose many causes are rooted in economic, political, religious and ethnic considerations.

As we see it, the Ouagadougou Agreement, which was the result of direct negotiations between the parties, represents an important attempt at unifying Côte d'Ivoire and ending the conflict. We are encouraged by the knowledge that the determination of the parties to implement the agreement continues at the political level, but the various stages need urgently to be put into practice. It is absolutely indispensable that a solution be found to the issue of the ranks and quotas for the Forces nouvelles elements that will be integrating into the unified army. This problem is a hurdle in the way of the removal of the zone of confidence and the establishment of the green line, the unification of the defence and security forces, the disarmament and dismantling of the militias and their reintegration. We support the Facilitator's efforts in achieving these objectives.

The Ouagadougou Agreement introduces local responses by the parties and has launched a new impetus for national ownership of the solution. This process needs continued support from regional organizations, the United Nations and the international community. It is necessary to provide technical assistance to national institutions including the integrated command centre. It is also indispensable to speedily carry out tasks, especially the integral reform of the security sector, the identification process, voter registration, restoring the authority of the State throughout the territory and respect for human rights.

In his most recent report on children and armed conflict (S/2007/515), the Secretary-General stated that there was an alarming level of violence against

children. He pointed to prevailing impunity. Although the number of murders and kidnappings of children has diminished, sexual abuse on both sides has continued to grow. The intervention of the International Criminal Court (ICC) could be an important way to fight impunity in Côte d'Ivoire; however, the Ivorian authorities have shown resistance to a possible mission of the ICC, which makes this, practically speaking, impossible.

The situation can and must get better. International humanitarian and human rights law require Ivorian authorities to put an end to impunity for those who are guilty and pay appropriate attention to the victims.

I would like to welcome the appointment of Mr. Choi Young-jin, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): First of all, Italy would like to join others in expressing a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Djibrill Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, for being here and for his comprehensive briefing and very encouraging remarks. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Acting Special Representative, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his outstanding work at this very delicate juncture, and to welcome the appointment of Ambassador Choi as the new Special Representative. I would also like to welcome the French Secretary of State, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marie Bockel, and thank him for what he has told us. I would also welcome the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, Ambassador Djédjé, to the table. I believe it is important that he feel the unwavering support of all members of the Security Council for his country as it emerges from a period of crisis.

In the light of the briefings given by Deputy Special Representative Moussa and Minister Bassolé, I believe it is important that we bear in mind the emphasis placed by Mr. Moussa on vulnerability to reversals. The Secretary-General was very clear when he stated in his report that the overall peace process and the improved security situation will remain fragile and vulnerable to reversals unless it is underpinned by concrete progress, et cetera. So I think that we have to constantly keep in mind that a reversal is possible.

What Minister Bassolé told us in that regard was very encouraging. He said that the shortcomings and delays have not been caused by a lack of political will. That is very important. I believe, as Minister Bassolé said in concluding his statement, that it is important to keep in mind that,

(*spoke in French*)

> "in spite of the slowness in the implementation of the Ouagadougou political Agreement, and in spite of the difficulties ... hope for true, lasting peace in this country is within reach."

(*spoke in English*)

Minister Bassolé should be aware of the fact that, as has been said by others, the Security Council and the international community at large are heavily indebted to President Compaore and to him, because their facilitation has been crucial in placing the international community's involvement in the Ivorian peace process on a new footing. Let me also say that Burkina Faso's leadership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its service to peace in Côte d'Ivoire and the wider region epitomize the type of approach that Italy would like to see increasingly strengthened by the Council.

In Côte d'Ivoire and beyond, regional ownership and political dialogue — a skilful use of the political toolbox — are key to crisis management in Africa. Like all preceding speakers, I applaud Burkina Faso's election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council as a clear acknowledgement that that is also the view of the wider United Nations membership.

With regard to Côte d'Ivoire, Italy believes that, so long as the Ouagadougou Agreement is in place and remains in place — as Minister Bassolé assured us it will — and the Facilitator remains strongly engaged — and we express our heartfelt appreciation for the implementation of the Agreement — there is room for trust. The Security Council should not hesitate to reflect such trust in its statements and decisions. Here, we welcome the draft press statement prepared by the French delegation. We express our thanks for that statement and look forward to it.

We are not naïve. We, too, are concerned by the problems and delays highlighted by Mr. Moussa and Minister Bassolé and by the Secretary-General in his report. It is, however, undeniable — and I think I am capturing the essence of what Mr. Bassolé just told us — that the Ouagadougou Agreement continues to hold and to be strongly backed by the Ivorian people. That is the crux of the matter. Certainly, there is still a

long road ahead; we should remain vigilant. But yesterday's arch-enemies, President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro, are today's leading actors in a genuine national effort to achieve peace, and that is a real watershed.

We believe that, in the months ahead, the Council, with the help of the Secretariat, should continue to think in depth about the speed, latitude and sequencing of the changes needed and about how best the Council can promote concrete steps forward in the peace process. We think that the voice of the Facilitator should be the first to be heard throughout this process, and we would welcome the opportunity to hear Minister Bassolé's view regarding what other things the United Nations should do to support the Facilitator's efforts. I will not go further into that, because Secretary of State Bockel was very clear in making his point about what more the United Nations can do and about what it cannot do.

I wish to express one final thought. We hope that the United Nations can soon host another type of meeting on Côte d'Ivoire — a meeting at which the economic, social and humanitarian aspects of the crisis will be at the centre of our attention. We believe that the best support we could give to the implementation of the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire would be to tangibly convey, through such an initiative, the idea that the United Nations is ready to place post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction at the centre of its efforts.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Ghana.

We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2007/593), and we take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the briefings provided by His Excellency Mr. Abou Moussa, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and by His Excellency Mr. Djibrill Bassolé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso and Facilitator of the Côte d'Ivoire peace process. We congratulate Mr. Choi on his appointment as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire.

Ghana welcomes the election of Burkina Faso, a neighbouring country with which we have excellent relations, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

The signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement opened a window of opportunity for all parties to the conflict to work towards peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire. The enthusiasm and confidence expressed by the international community at that time marked the beginning of a genuine process towards peace, and we are aware of the progress that has been achieved since then.

However, I wish to express concern about delays in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement, which are due mainly to the limited capacity of national institutions charged with the implementation of key tasks. In particular, the lack of the requisite planning, logistics, personnel and financial capacity has affected the deployment of mixed units and the restoration of State administration throughout Côte d'Ivoire.

At the same time, we acknowledge that there are issues that require stronger political will on the part of the Ivorian parties to advance the peace process. There has been no progress in unifying the defence and security forces in Côte d'Ivoire with the Forces nouvelles, owing to disagreement over ranks and the number of Forces nouvelles personnel to be absorbed into the new armed forces, and the preference of the Forces nouvelles not to disarm before joining the restructured force. Clearly, the onus is on the leaders to resolve their differences so as to enable the implementation process to regain its earlier momentum.

We commend Côte d'Ivoire's international partners for the pledges made in support of the peace process, and we urge them to redeem those pledges to ensure the provision of the financial and logistical support necessary for the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the current troop levels of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire be maintained and that a further review be conducted at a future date.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I call on the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank Mr. Abou Moussa for his briefing and to congratulate Minister Bassolé on his

excellent summary of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. I also thank Mr. Jean-Marie Bockel, Secretary of State for Cooperation and Francophony of France, for his presence. I appreciate the statements made by members of the Security Council, which were also encouraging. Finally, I welcome the appointment of Ambassador Choi as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire.

We are meeting once again for another debate on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, to consider the fourteenth progress report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1765 (2007).

I will make a few comments on the report of the Secretary-General before coming to the United Nations management of the Ouagadougou Agreement.

Allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate the Secretary-General on his fourteenth report on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) (S/2007/593). This report shows pretty well that the political climate has generally improved since the signature of the Ouagadougou Agreement and adoption of resolution 1765 (2007). However, it contains a few statements that call for some comments on my part.

With specific regard to section VI, dealing with human rights, paragraph 40 refers to reports received by UNOCI concerning children being trafficked for economic and sexual exploitation in the south of the country, and cases of torture and mistreatment by the members of the Forces nouvelles and by Dozo traditional hunters in the north. Similarly, paragraph 61 of the report states that continuing human rights abuses are extremely disturbing and that the leadership of the Forces nouvelles and the command of the defence and security forces of Côte d'Ivoire have an obligation to address those problems and to ensure discipline among their personnel.

The report of the Secretary-General is a reference document, and comments contained therein must be supported by specific facts that can be verified by all. The staff of our Organization must work on the basis of facts and not allegations that are circulated here and there. I, too, regularly receive reports of corruption on the part of some UNOCI officials, especially from the Human Rights Office, aiming at having them include some assertions in their reports in an attempt to tarnish the image of the Government. Nevertheless, I have never included such information in an official document, as I do not have any evidence. It would be risky for me to do so.

Therefore, my delegation solemnly requests UNOCI staff to be more strict when drafting their reports, as these reports involve the reputation of a State and of an entire people who are ready to correct their weaknesses, as long as they are based on facts that can be verified by all.

The second item in my statement is about sanctions. The Ouagadougou political Agreement, which was ratified by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, requested in its in article 6.4 that the United Nations Security Council immediately lift the individual sanctions imposed on actors in the Ivorian crisis. In article 6.1.2 of the same Agreement, the signatories request an immediate special authorization to import the light weapons necessary to maintain public order and security.

Almost eight months after the Ouagadougou Agreement was signed, none of the measures expected of the United Nations in support of its implementation has been taken. On the contrary, an outdated draft resolution for the extension of sanctions for another year is being circulated.

Those who were fighting each other yesterday are best friends today. Two days ago, on Saturday, 20 October, Prime Minister Guillaume Soro was invited to meet with Charles Blé Goudé in President Laurent Gbagbo's native region. The war in Côte d'Ivoire is over. If sanctions were intended to ensure reconciliation and the end of war, why should they be maintained today? Is there is another objective that the United Nations wants to reach by maintaining the sanctions when the context of 2007 is totally different from that of 2004, when resolution 1572 (2004) was adopted? How can one continue, in October 2007, the content and the tone of resolution 1643 (2005), adopted in December 2005?

In spite of the competence and goodwill of our friends at the French delegation, who initiate draft resolutions on Côte d'Ivoire, my delegation proposes, following the example of Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konaré, an innovative interpretation of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, taking into account the regional dimension. Peace in Côte d'Ivoire was brought about by the sons and daughters of Côte d'Ivoire and was facilitated by a head of State of the

West African subregion, with the support of Africa. The Security Council has three African members. Why not let them initiate draft resolutions on Côte d'Ivoire? One should remember that, in 2004, it was the African Union that came up with the idea of imposing sanctions against Côte d'Ivoire. Today, ECOWAS and the same African Union are requesting that sanctions be lifted. Why is France so intent on hounding Côte d'Ivoire and some of its political actors? Is it to punish them? If that were the case, it would be contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter.

To conclude, I would like to recall the remarks of Chairperson Konaré, who on 25 September in this same Chamber said (see S/PV.5749) that our partners must let Africans run their own business and that financing is important, but it does not justify unbridled intervention or conduct.

The President: In accordance with understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.